

From: Scott Francis
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 3:26pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I am very disturbed by the proposed anti-trust settlement in the Microsoft v DOJ case. In spite of Attorney General Ashcroft's words to the contrary, this settlement is neither 'strong' nor 'historic', and amounts to little more than a slap on the wrist to Microsoft. More importantly, it does nothing to reduce the barrier to entry that Microsoft has erected in the operating system and applications market.

The proposed ruling will do nothing to make it easier for a competitor to Microsoft to release a product designed to run on Windows and compete with Microsoft's own applications. We have seen how this scenario played out in the past - Microsoft either crushed its competitors (Corel's WordPerfect suite, for instance), absorbed them (WebTV, purchase of SGI's image patents, etc.) or changed existing standards just enough to exclude competitors (Kerberos comes to mind).

Any ruling that does not force Microsoft to allow competitors in the application field fair and unrestricted access to the Windows source code (and more importantly, user base) without Microsoft attempting their famous 'embrace and extend' tactic (see previous paragraph), will ultimately have no effect on the reality of the Microsoft monopoly. Microsoft will continue to hold the home computing market, and the majority of the business computing market, in a stranglehold, locking people into inferior products, preventing them from exercising free choice among a variety of options, and generally preventing innovation and growth in the computing industry.

I do not wish to see the Internet go the way of the desktop computing landscape. If Microsoft is allowed to proceed unchecked, with 'business as usual', they will eventually consume the Internet as well (Hailstorm/.NET comes to mind).

Thanks for your consideration.

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